

**U.S. Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

Environmental Assessment

**DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0003-EA
November 6, 2013**

**Sacramento Valley R-O-W Reauthorizations
AZA 016380 & AZA 011929**

Applicant: UNS Electric, Inc.

**Kingman Field Office
2755 Mission Blvd.
Kingman, AZ 86401
Phone: 928-718-3700
Fax: 928-718-3761**

**Prepared By: Maria Troche
Signed: January 14, 2014**



EA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0003-EA

Case File Numbers: AZA 016380, AZA 011929

Proposed Action Title/Type: Sacramento Valley Rights-of-Way Reauthorizations

Applicants: UNS Electric, Inc.

Location of Proposed Action:

AZA 016380: sec. 5, T. 23 N., R. 18 W., G&SRM (20.8kV powerline)

AZA 011929: sec. 4, T. 24 N., R. 19 W., G&SRM (12kV powerline)

BACKGROUND

Rights-of-way (ROWs) AZA 016380 and AZA 011929 were authorized and constructed according to the terms and conditions of their respective grants. Each ROW was eligible to be renewed; however the applicant, UNS Electric, Inc., failed to file renewal applications 120-days prior to the application expiration date in accordance with 43 CFR 2807.22. As a result, the expired grants cannot be renewed. Under the Proposed Action each grant will be reauthorized with the original serial number. The term of these grants will be for 30 years, expiring on December 31, 2043.

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN

This Proposed Action is in conformance with the Kingman Resource Management Plan approved March 1995. Remarks: RMP Decision number and narrative:

Decision LR13/B3: Minor ROWs would be evaluated through the environmental review process and granted or rejected on a case-by-case basis. Existing ROWs would be used when possible to minimize surface disturbance (Kingman RMP, p. 66).

Comment: The ROWs described in this document are considered minor.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the action is to respond to UNS Electric, Inc. request for ROWs. The need for the action is established by the BLM's responsibility under the Federal Land Management and Policy Act and 43 CFR Part 2800 to grant or deny a ROW upon the submission of a complete application.

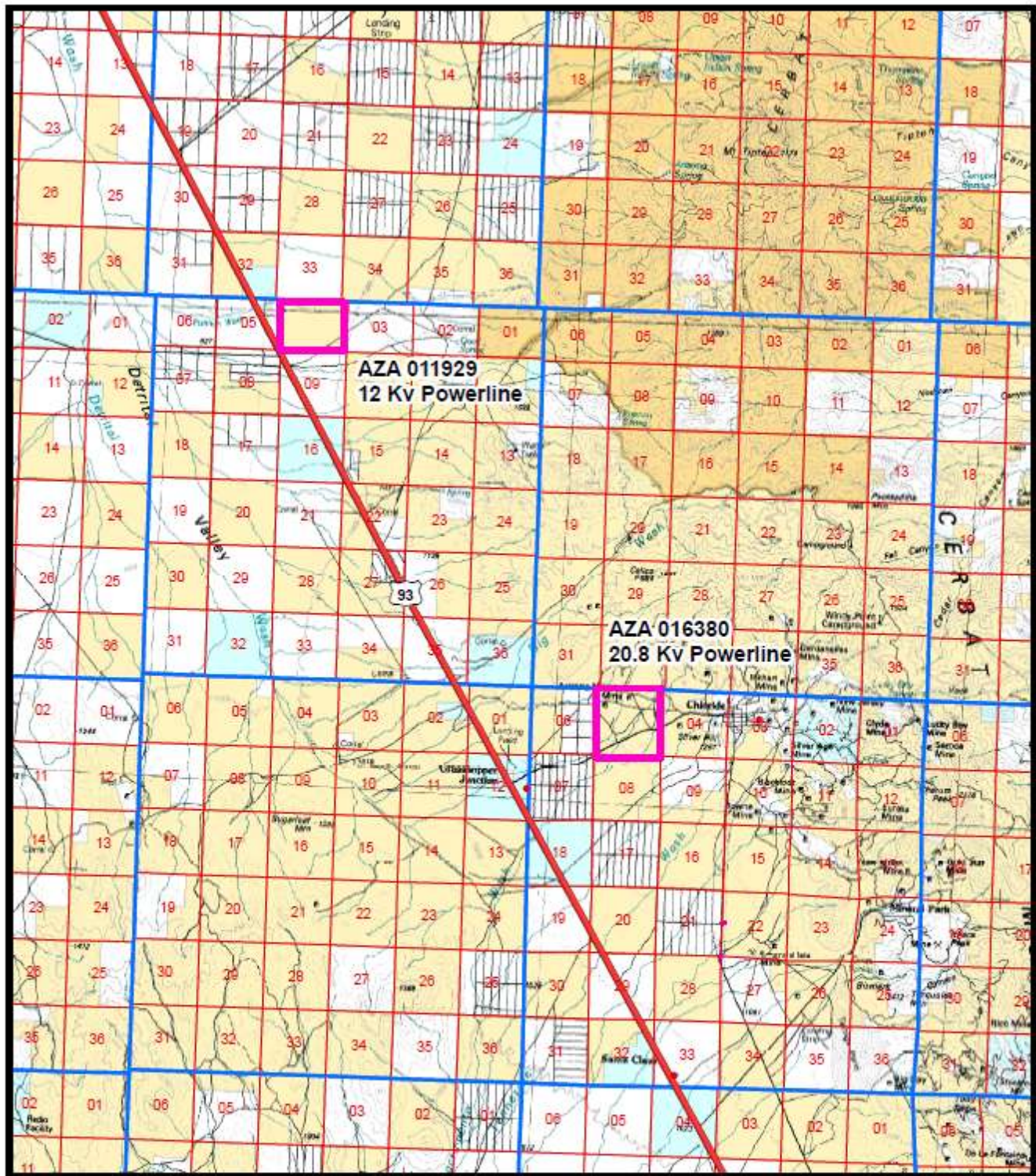
DECISION TO BE MADE

The BLM Authorized Officer will decide whether to reauthorize the ROWs described in the Proposed Action Alternative, deny the applications, or approve them with modifications.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The Proposed Action is to reauthorize ROWs AZA 016380 and AZA 011929 under the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Management and Policy Act for the operation, maintenance, and termination of one 20.8kV powerline and one 12kV electrical distribution line. The terms for each of these ROWs would be for 30 years. Refer to Table 1 and Maps 1, 2, and 3 for details of the Proposed Action components.

Serial Number	Type	Location	ROW Length (feet)	ROW Width (feet)	Total Current ROW (acres)
016380	20.8 kV Powerline	T. 23 N., R. 18 W., sec. 5	1333.11	15	0.459
011929	12 kV Powerline	T. 24 N., R. 19 W., sec. 4	596	15	0.210
TOTAL					0.669



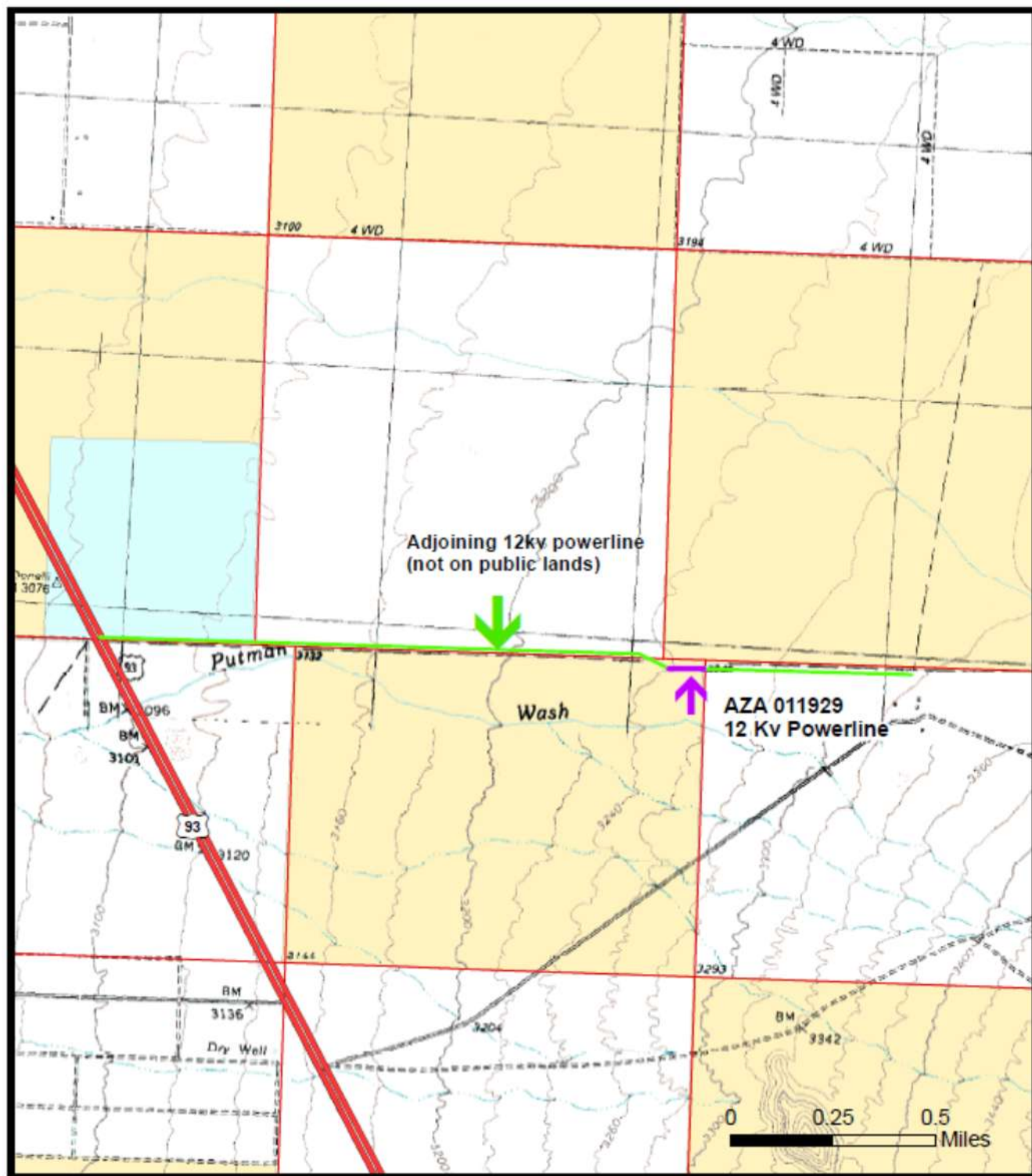
BLM
 Private



0 1.5 3 Miles

AZA 011929 - 12Kv Powerline
 T23N R19W sec 4
 AZA 016380 - 20.8Kv Powerline
 T23N R18W sec 5

Created on: November 6, 2013

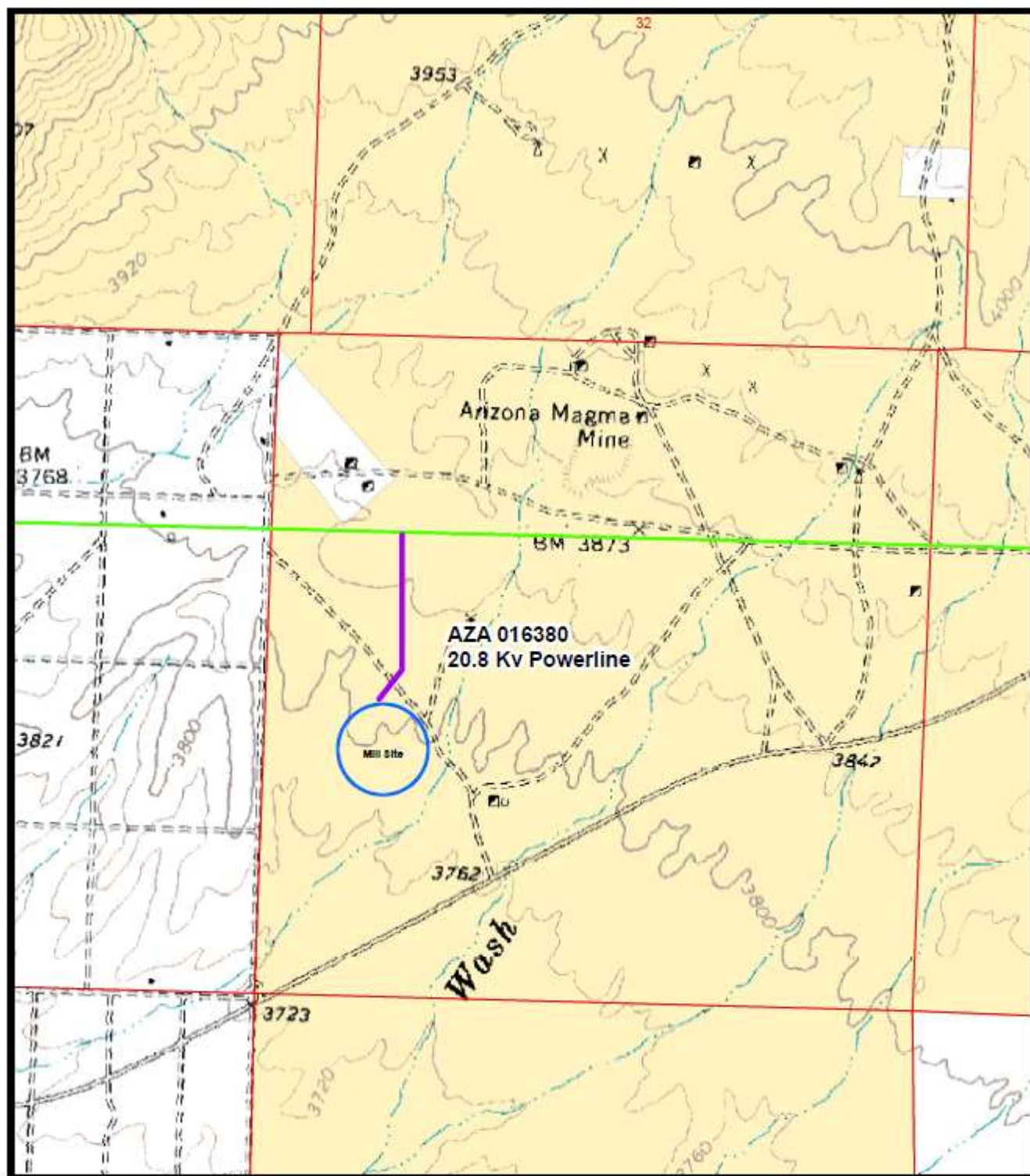


- BLM
- Private
- Powerline on BLM
- Powerline on PRIVATE



AZA 011929 - 12Kv Powerline T23N R19W sec 4

EXHIBIT A
Created on: November 6, 2013



- BLM
- Private
- AZA 016380
- AZA 078948



0 0.15 0.3
Miles

AZA 016380 - 20Kv Powerline T23N R18W sec 5

EXHIBIT A
Created on: November 6, 2013

DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Under the No Action Alternative the applications for the ROWs would be denied. If the application for renewal were denied, UNS Electric, Inc. would be required to remove the current facilities as described in the terms and conditions of their respective grants.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

This section describes the existing conditions of the environment and expected impacts. The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the KFO Project Scoping Form found in the Administrative Record for this proposal. Resources of concern that are either not present in the project area, or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis, will not be discussed here. Resources which could be impacted by the Proposed Action or alternatives are discussed below.

The table below summarizes the resources reviewed for this project. Those resources that have been identified by an interdisciplinary team as present and potentially affected are discussed further below.

Table 2 PROJECT RESOURCE review			
Resources Considered	Not Present	Present and Not Affected	Present and/or Potentially Affected
Air Quality*		X	
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*	X		
Cultural and Historic*	X		
Environmental Justice* / Socioeconomics			X
Floodplains*	X		
Grazing		X	
Hazardous or Solid Waste*	X		
Invasive and Non-native Species*	X		
Land Use		X	
Migratory Birds*			X
Native American Religious Concerns*	X		
Prime and Unique Farmland*	X		
Threatened and Endangered Species*		X	
Vegetation			X
Visual Resources		X	
Water Quality*	X		
Wetland or Riparian Zones*	X		
Wild and Scenic Rivers*	X		
Wilderness*	X		
Wildlife			X
* Consideration Required By Law or Executive Order			

IMPACTS FROM THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Justice/Socioeconomics

The facilities currently exist; therefore, under the Proposed Action residents and visitors to the area would continue to be served by these facilities. No additional impacts would occur.

Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species, and Critical Habitat

There would be “no affect” to threatened, endangered, and proposed species or critical habitat as none are found within the project or action area (areas adjacent to the site). The project area is located within the California Condor Nonessential Experimental Population Area (section 10J of the ESA). This designation allows the FWS to manage the population in a manner that would allow current and future land, water, or air uses and activities to continue without restriction. Federal agencies, with exception of the National Park Service and the National Wildlife Refuge System, are only required to informally confer with the FWS on actions that are likely to jeopardize the condor in this population area.

It is determined that this proposal would have no effect to the California condor for the following reasons: The paucity of large game animals within the project area would preclude Condor foraging in the project area. Condors prefer to forage on large carcasses but opportunistically would forage on smaller animals. They are visually attracted to their food sources and therefore are less likely to see small dead animals. Big game densities within Mohave Desert shrub habitat and livestock densities are low because of low biomass production. The condor’s main foraging areas are on the Kaibab Plateau (mostly north Kaibab), Paria Plateau, south rim of the Grand Canyon, and Colob Canyon area just northeast of Zion National Park (2005, pers. comm. Kathy Sullivan, Condor Biologist, AGFD and Chris Parish, Condor Biologist, Peregrine Fund). They forage in the other areas because of higher densities of big game, left-over hunter kills and because there are suitable perching areas such as large ponderosa pine trees (large perch site needed because of the large size of condors) and cliffs. Condors prefer cliff habitat because cliffs are more likely to produce updrafts for soaring (2005, pers. comm. C. Parish). Both C. Parish and K. Sullivan, 2005 (pers. comm.) state that they doubted that condors would use the desert areas east of U.S Highway 93.

Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat

The affected environment is located in Mohave County, Arizona, approximately 15 miles northwest of Kingman, Arizona, at an elevation of approximately 4,000 feet. The two facilities occupy a total of 0.67 acres of public lands north of Highway 93. AZA 016380 is an overhead electrical distribution line that ties into existing powerline ROW 078948, and terminates at a millsite on public lands. AZA 011929 is a portion of an electrical distribution line that follows a fenceline and crosses into public lands for approximately 600 feet. The entire powerline runs north from Highway 93 to several ranch houses. The surrounding vegetation community for both ROWS is desert scrub, dominated by catclaw acacia, creosote bush, flatter buckwheat and snakeweed, and numerous types of cacti. Both locations are located on BLM lands within checker-board townships. Because the facilities already exist, the Proposed Action would have no impacts to existing vegetation. Access to these facilities is within previously disturbed areas; therefore, the Proposed Action will have no expected impacts to vegetation during the maintenance of these facilities.

The general fauna of the region is dominated by various bird, lizard, snake, and rodent species with coyote, bobcat, and raptors being the common predators. BLM Sensitive species that have the potential of occurring in the project vicinity are the western burrowing owl, golden eagle, Allen’s big-eared bat, Arizona myotis, cave myotis, Townsend’s big-eared bat, and California leaf-nosed bat.

The powerlines have the potential to electrocute raptors including the golden eagle and western burrowing owl since they were not built according to the specifications outlined in "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection

on Powerlines," Raptor Research Foundation, Inc., 2006".

Bats use the project area for foraging. There are no roost sites that would be affected.

Other species of wildlife would not be affected since the facilities already exist and the proposal would use existing disturbed areas.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

The locations of the facilities to be re-authorized are in VRM Class II and IV areas. The powerline authorized under AZA 016380 is in the Class II area. Class II provides for the retention of landscape character and the existing powerline meets this criterion. As requested by BLM as a mitigation measure, powerline poles were constructed with dark wood, and conductors and guy wires were non-reflective". AZA 011929 is located in the Class IV area. The objective for VRM Class IV allows for changes which may subordinate the landscape character, and AZA 011929 meets this criterion. Under the Proposed Action the objectives for VRM management would be met.

IMPACTS FROM THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

Environmental Justice/Socioeconomics

If these ROWs are denied, several residences would no longer receive power or telephone services from the existing facilities.

Vegetation and Wildlife Habitat

If the powerlines are no longer authorized, the facilities will need to be removed. The facilities currently occupy approximately 0.67 acres of public lands. Vegetation and wildlife habitat may be temporarily impacted during the removal activity. This disturbance is not expected to last more than a day at each pole location. Both locations are already disturbed, and it is unlikely either location will return to a natural state after the facilities are removed.

Visual Resource Management (VRM)

If the ROWs are denied, and the facilities are removed, there will be no impacts to VRM. The objectives for VRM Class IV would be met by the No Action Alternative.

Cumulative Impacts

Other power and telephone lines make up a portion of the cumulative impacts in the areas which are close to the area of these authorizations. There would be no cumulative impacts to T&E species, ~~or BLM sensitive species,~~ because the area does not currently support these species. There would be no impacts to cultural resources because the area is already disturbed from historical activities that have occurred in the area.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:

Preparer: Maria Troche, BLM Kingman Field Office Land Law Examiner

Environmental Coordinator: Ramone McCoy

Len Marceau, Outdoor Recreation Planner (VRM)

Tim Watkins, Archaeologist

Rebecca Peck, Wildlife Biologist

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0003-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

/s/ Ruben Sanchez
Field Manager, Kingman

01/14/2014
Date

DECISION RECORD

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0003-EA

Decision: The BLM Authorized Officer will re-authorize the ROWs described in the Proposed Action Alternative with modifications to the terms and conditions of the grant.

Rationale for Decision: The ROWs will be re-authorized because the facilities provide services to residents in the area and the impacts are not expected to be significant.

Stipulations: See the individual ROW grants and Stipulation No. 1 below.

1. Unless otherwise agreed to by the Authorized Officer in writing, when powerlines are rebuilt or the conductors replaced, they shall be constructed in accordance to standards outlined in "Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Powerlines," Raptor Research Foundation, Inc., 2006. The Holder shall assume the burden and expense of proving that pole designs not shown in the above publication are "eagle safe." Such proof shall be provided by a raptor expert approved by the Authorized Officer. The BLM reserves the right to require modifications or additions to all powerline structures placed on this right-of-way, should they be necessary to ensure the safety of large perching birds. Such modifications and/or additions shall be made by the Holder without liability or expense to the United States

/s/ Ruben Sanchez
Field Manager, Kingman

01/14/2014
Date

KINGMAN FIELD OFFICE SCOPING FORM

Proposal: Reauthorize Right-of-Way AZA 16380 and AZA 011929

NEPA Document Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2014-0003-EA

Document Location: K:\nepa\AA-Completed NEPA Documents\2014 NEPA Documents\AZA011929 16380

Land Description: AZA 016380 - sec. 5 T. 23 N., R 18 W., G&SRM
AZA 011929 - sec. 4 T. 24 N., R. 19 W., G&SRM

Applicant: UNS Electric, Inc.

Authorization: Rights-of-way

INVOLVEMENT: Indicate in the left column which disciplines need to provide information into the EA.

Needed Input (X)	Discipline	Signature
	Lands	
	Minerals	
	Range	
	Wild Horse and Burro	
	General Recreation	
X	Cultural and Paleontological Resources	/s/ Tim Watkins 12/16/2013
	Wilderness	
	Soils	
	Surface and Groundwater Quality/Water Rights	
	Air Quality	
X	Wildlife	/s/ Rebecca Peck 12/06/2013
X	Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals	/s/ Rebecca Peck 12/06/2013
X	Migratory Birds	/s/ Rebecca Peck 12/06/2013
	Surface Protection	
	Hazardous Materials	
	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	
X	Visual Resources	/s/ Leonard Marceau 12/16/2013
	Socio-Economics/Environmental Justice	
	General Botany/Noxious Weeds	
	Energy Policy	

Writer: /s/ Maria Troche

Date: 12/02/2013

Environmental Coordinator: /s/ Ramone McCoy

Date: 12/16/2013

Field Manager: /s/ Ruben Sanchez

Date: 01/14/2013